



## Step Up to QUALITY: Starfall Pre K 4 Alignment

### Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum and Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines Alignment Form

**Indicator: Utilizes an evidence-based developmentally appropriate curriculum.**

The Early Childhood Education Program shall provide a play-oriented learning environment which facilitates the optimal growth and development of children with opportunities for age-appropriate learning experiences through active involvement with people and materials.

**Please explain how your program curriculum is play-oriented, age-appropriate, and includes active involvement with people and materials:**

The Starfall Pre-K 4 Curriculum builds a cooperative classroom environment to fuel motivation, with child-directed instruction, hands-on experiences, ownership of materials, and interactive online activities, and by supporting and exploring imagination.

Daily Learning Centers provide the most natural and effective use of classroom materials, time, and space. They are fun and based on purposeful play, which is integral to how young children learn. The children are free to make choices, to handle, taste, smell, and observe, to explore at their own developmental levels, to solve problems in their own way, to share with friends, to dramatize, and create.

### Nebraska Curriculum Alignment with the Early Learning Guidelines Worksheet

Early Learning Guidelines Domains

## **Social and Emotional Development Domain**

### ***Social Relationships***

#### Preschool (3-5)

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum promotes healthy relationships with both peers and adults and provides opportunities to develop them in a variety of settings. Lessons include multiple opportunities for children to follow each other's conversational lead and demonstrate knowledge of verbal conversational rules as well as working with others to solve problems in personal, school and social settings.

Daily Learning Centers provide the children with an opportunity to explore at their own developmental levels, to solve problems in their own ways, to share with friends and to create. As the children move through the variety of activities, they meet different groups of children and learn to work and socialize with others who may not always see things as they do.

### ***Self-Regulation***

#### Self-Concept (3-5)

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum provides multiple opportunities for children to meet with problems and learn to solve them on their own, increasing self-respect and confidence in their own abilities, and empowering children with self management skills, enabling them to become successful lifelong learners.

The children frequently explore their feelings during the daily Morning Meetings, build in the Construction Center, and express their creativity through music, drama, and art. They also have frequent opportunities to display their creations, share writings and illustrations, and learn to appreciate and compliment each other's efforts.

#### Self-Control (3-5)

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum assists children in recognizing and internally managing both positive and negative emotions, and provides multiple opportunities for children to express their needs and feelings, share experiences, predict outcomes and resolve problems particularly in Morning Meeting, Circle Time, Learning Centers and Small Group & Exploration activities.

Throughout the curriculum, the children engage in cooperative pretend play in Dramatic Play Centers, follow step by step directions in Warm Up Your Brain activities and use literature as a basis to problem solve.

### Cooperation (3-5)

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum allows children to demonstrate and apply decision making skills daily in both academic and social settings, which enables them to develop positive relationships within both the school and community.

Starfall celebrates children and provides opportunities for them to recognize their uniqueness and individuality throughout the curriculum through group discussions, literature, and creative arts. However, children realize that while they are unique individuals, they also must function as members of several groups. Therefore lessons include focus on self, family, and community, and the children come to understand the importance of cooperation through activities such as learning centers, partner sharing, group discussions, science experiments, shared writings, and a variety of daily routines.

### Knowledge of Families and Communities (3-5)

In the Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum, the children learn to recognize their memberships in families, neighborhoods, school, teams, and a variety of other groups. They understand that groups have leaders, and that each person in a group has unique talents and therefore contributes to the choices and decisions the group makes. They also recognize rules, and their purpose in allowing groups to work effectively.

## **Approaches to Learning**

### ***Initiative and Curiosity:***

Preschooler (3-5)

The Starfall Pre-K 4 Curriculum inspires motivation, curiosity, and joyful discovery through practical and proven methods. Young children learn best when they can make connections across many disciplines. Therefore, early literacy, math, social studies, science, social-emotional development, creative arts, physical movement, health, and technology are integrated throughout the curriculum.

### ***Sensory Exploration and Problem Solving***

Reasoning and Problem Solving (3 to 5):

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum uses both small and large group settings to provide multiple opportunities for children to participate in scientific investigations. They demonstrate curiosity through investigation and experimentation, observing and examining objects, making and verifying predictions, as well as participating in collecting, describing and recording information.

Using their senses, the children explore properties of objects and their environment. They participate in ongoing observations of changes in weather and seasons, making and verifying predictions, and use charts and graphs to display and interpret data.

## **Health and Physical Development**

### ***Fine (Small) Motor Skills***

Preschool (3-5)

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum focuses on fine motor skills through the use of writing and drawing tools, blocks and other manipulatives. Throughout the year, the children develop their fine motor skills by participating in writing and drawing activities, and other activities within the Art and Discovery Centers and Small Group Exploration. They also use blocks and other building materials and exploring in the Construction and Discovery Centers.

### ***Gross (Large) Motor Skills***

Preschool (3-5)

Engaging in health enhancing physical activity is a daily occurrence in Starfall's Morning Meeting sessions and throughout the day during Outside Activities, Learning Centers, and Small Group Exploration. The Starfall Pre K Curriculum combines a sequence of large motor skills covering both balance and self control, helping the children to become practiced and confident in physical activity.

Research shows that children are getting less and less exercise. It also shows that engaging both sides of the brain during movement helps children to better focus and engage in activities. The "Warm Up Your Brain" activities were carefully chosen to assist children in accessing both sides of their brains, creating brain patterns, and developing core strength, which improve large and small motor skills and provide opportunities for movement.

### ***Health Behaviors and Practices***

Health Status and Practices (3-5):

Appropriate health and safety procedures, good nutritional practices, and dangers are integrated through group discussions, learning centers, and a variety of activities throughout the Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum. Let's Stay Healthy, My Five Senses, and Safety Posters 1 and 2 are Included in the list of materials, and are frequently used as visual learning tools.

## ***Nutrition***

Preschool (3-5)

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum teaches the children good nutritional practices through group discussions, exploration activities and learning centers.

Through visual posters and stories, the children learn to make good nutritional choices and develop habits for lifelong fitness through discussions of good nutritional practices and appropriate health issues. They make connections with information presented, and are able to self assess and set personal goals.

## **Language and Literacy Development**

### ***Listening and Understanding***

Preschool (3-5)

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum helps children with receptive language by increasing their knowledge through listening and providing multi-step directions.

The children are encouraged to ask questions during formal lessons and at any time throughout the day. Group discussions and interactions during Story Time, Small Group Exploration, and Learning Centers give teachers opportunities to check for understanding.

### ***Speaking and Communicating***

Preschool (3 to 5):

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum provides opportunities for children to use language through conversations with adults and peers in multiple settings.

The Interaction & Observation suggestions included in daily learning centers assist the teacher in helping the children improve their communication skills and develop the

children's understanding that their ideas may differ from those of their classmates. This expands their knowledge and teaches them to exchange ideas and respect the viewpoints of others.

#### Phonological Awareness (3 to 5):

Children learn to recognize and produce rhymes, alliteration, compound words, beginning and ending sounds, and syllables through games, songs and poems. These concepts are introduced and practiced daily during Circle and Morning Meeting Times. These phonological skills are further explored during learning centers and small group exploration.

The sequence of letter introduction is determined by the most frequently encountered letters and sounds, placing similar letter sounds apart from each other, and giving the children the opportunity to blend early sounds together to form words. Previously introduced letters and sounds are reviewed and reinforced with the introduction of each new letter and sound.

### ***Book Knowledge and Appreciation***

#### Preschool (3 to 5):

Starfall has produced many fiction and nonfiction stories, and has rewritten many traditional fairy tales and fables for the Pre K 4 Curriculum. The children further explore the literature independently by reading books with accompanying CDs or by viewing and interacting with stories read aloud in The Talking Library on *Starfall.com*. The inclusion of classic stories and additional quality literature as often as possible is strongly encouraged.

Group lessons and imaginative, playful learning take place throughout the school year with Starfall's literature and informational texts. Children are guided to understand these texts on various levels through prediction, discussion, retelling and roleplay. These stories are also accessed on *Starfall.com* where children listen and navigate through the stories.

Starfall books include colorful photographs and illustrations that provide inspiration from real life role models, spark curiosity through scientific discovery, and guide introspection with morals from fables and fairy tales.

### ***Print Awareness and Early Writing***

Print Awareness and Concepts (3 to 5):

Starfall's Pre K 4 Curriculum guides children to connect oral language and print through shared writing and read alouds. They are able to show where reading begins, point out directionality in print, distinguish print/illustration relationships, identify parts of a book, and understand that letters form words, by participating in group discussions and interactions with teachers and classmates. These interactions occur throughout the day during Morning Meeting, Storytime, Small Group Exploration and Learning Centers.

Early Writing and Alphabet Knowledge (3 to 5):

Learning Centers integrate literacy learning by featuring reading and writing, therefore paper and pencils are found in the Construction Center for children to use for a purpose, such as to create signs, and in the Dramatic Play Center to write grocery lists, etc. Writing is frequently modeled by the teacher, and the children often participate in shared writings about experiences and for a variety of purposes.

In a Starfall Pre K 4 classroom, a Starfall Alphabet Poster is displayed in the Writing Center, and Alphabet Cards are displayed at the children's eye level. Each Alphabet Card contains the uppercase and lowercase letters and a sound picture. The designated sound-picture is used throughout the curriculum to introduce and review that letter and sound.

## **Mathematics**

## ***Numbers and Operations***

Preschool (3 to 5):

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum integrates and emphasizes math skills and concepts. Direct instruction, center exploration, games, activities, and daily routines provide a purposeful approach to applied math the children encounter in everyday life.

Children are provided with the opportunities to create a variety of graphs and charts on which they gather data regarding such topics as the weather, their favorite spices, and make predictions and estimates. They then analyze the data collected and interpret the results.

Songs, poems, and games, small group and center exploration, as well as interaction with number activities on *Starfall.com* help to reinforce math concepts.

## ***Spatial Sense***

Geometry and Spatial Sense (3 to 5):

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum builds a strong foundation for mathematical thinking through center exploration, activities, and games.

The children are introduced to two and three dimensional shapes and asked to describe differences between such objects as a picture of an ice cream cone and a three dimensional cone.

## ***Pattern and Measurement***

Preschool (3 to 5):

Measurement skills are taught in context, with the students building creations then comparing their heights and lengths, using nonstandard references to determine which is the tallest or shortest. They learn to make realistic guesses to improve their estimation skills, and they practice these skills in situations in which they predict, then

measure and compare their estimates to actual data.

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum teaches children to examine the relationships between objects and to describe their attributes. They also notice patterns in the world around them, such as weather patterns and letter patterns, and they sort and arrange objects and shapes to create and extend patterns.

## **Science**

### ***Scientific Skills and Methods***

Preschool (3 to 5):

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum uses both small and large group settings to provide multiple opportunities for children to participate in scientific investigations. They demonstrate curiosity through investigation and experimentation, observing and examining objects, making and verifying predictions, as well as participating in, collecting, describing and recording information. These skills are taught, practiced and explored during Small Groups and Exploration, Discovery Centers, Morning Meetings, and Circle Times taking place throughout the day.

The children explore the concepts of force and motion through use of simple tools, investigation, observation and examination. There are multiple opportunities to make and verify predictions, and to collect, describe, and record information.

### ***Scientific Knowledge***

Preschool (3 to 5):

In Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum science lessons, the children explore growth and change of living things, recognize their similar needs for water, food and air. The lessons provide opportunities to compare, contrast, and classify objects and data. Using their senses, the children explore properties of objects and their environment.

They participate in ongoing observations of changes in weather and seasons, making and verifying predictions, and use charts and graphs to display and interpret data.

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum explores concepts related to the earth such as characteristics of the sun, moon, stars and clouds. Activities and lessons also incorporate environmental issues such as recycling and the importance of taking care of our planet and its resources.

## ***Creative Arts***

### ***Music***

Preschool (3 to 5):

The Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum frequently incorporates music and movement, often by including songs and fingerplays in the daily Morning Meetings, through the use of two volumes of Starfall's Sing Along CDs. The Seasonal Holiday Supplement provides ideas for activities that include a variety of cultural music experiences, including songs, dances, and the creation of musical instruments.

Through participation in cultural music, dance, and drama, as well as exposure to classical music and composers on *Starfall.com*, children develop an understanding of, and recognize the role of the arts in our society, both past and present.

### ***Art***

Preschool (3 to 5):

In the Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum the children develop an awareness of different types of art, expressing themselves by using a variety of media to create and share original artwork, during class art projects, Activity Time and the daily Art Learning Center.

The children demonstrate an understanding of the different processes and materials used to express ideas and meaning through art. They also learn about famous artists, their artistic styles and their contributions on *Starfall.com*.

## ***Movement***

Preschool (3 to 5):

Music, drama, and dance are integral parts of the Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum. Lessons allow children to express themselves and communicate ideas through movement, by creating their own movements and actions.

The Seasonal Holiday Supplement provides cultural movement activities such as “leaf dancing” using Vivaldi or other classical music, Chinese ribbon dancing, dragon dancing, and a “Ring Shout” or African harvest celebration.

## ***Dramatic Play***

Preschool (3 to 5):

In the Starfall Pre K 4 Curriculum exposes children to creative arts including music, dance, drama and theatre. The children frequently role play and dramatize stories or outcomes in group lessons. They also use the daily Dramatic Play Center to take on a variety of roles, including those of family members, bakery workers, doctors and nurses, grocery store workers, and television weather reporters.

The standards in this document were copied directly from the state Department of Education.